

First record of Grey-necked Picathartes *Picathartes oreas* for Central African Republic

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Première mention du Picatharte du Cameroun *Picathartes oreas* pour la République centrafricaine. En novembre 2009, six nids du Picatharte du Cameroun *Picathartes oreas* ont été découverts sur des parois rocheuses à l'intérieur de la forêt dense du Parc National de Dzangha Sangha, République centrafricaine. Deux nids contenaient chacun deux oisillons; un adulte a été observé. Ceci constitue la première donnée pour le pays; la population nicheuse la plus proche se trouve à environ 140 km vers l'ouest, dans le Parc National de Boumba-Bek, au Cameroun.

On 16 November 2009, while exploring a heavily forested area on the Sangha River, in the south-western Central African Republic, RC & BW found three nests consisting of half-cups of mud plastered against a rock wall (Figs. 1–2). They were obviously those of Grey-necked Picathartes *Picathartes oreas* (Fry 2000). Two of the nests

contained two chicks each; the third was damaged. While observing the nests, an adult Grey-necked Picathartes appeared, but did not stay long. A week later, further exploration revealed another three nests along a 500-m stretch of rock-face. The site is c.5 km upstream of Sangha Lodge, near Bayanga in the Dzanga Sangha Reserve. The area is covered in dense tropical forest and has a large rocky ridge with exposed rock-faces and waterfalls.

Grey-necked Picathartes is a local species recorded from south-east Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon (Fry 2000), and has recently also been reported from south-west Congo-Brazzaville (Mamonekene & Bokandza-Paco 2006). It has not previously been reported from Central African Republic (Dowsett 1993, Thompson 2007). The nearest breeding population is in Boumba-Bek National Park,



Figure 1. Rock-face with nest of Grey-necked Picathartes *Picathartes oreas*, Dzangha Sangha Protected Area, Central African Republic, 16 November 2009 (R. Cassidy).

Paroi rocheuse avec nid du Picatharte du Cameroun *Picathartes oreas*, Parc National de Dzangha Sangha, République centrafricaine, 16 novembre 2009 (R. Cassidy)



Figure 2. Nest of Grey-necked Picathartes *Picathartes oreas*, Dzangha Sangha Protected Area, Central African Republic, 16 November 2009 (R. Cassidy).

Nid du Picatharte du Cameroun *Picathartes oreas*, Parc National de Dzangha Sangha, République centrafricaine, 16 novembre 2009 (R. Cassidy)

Cameroon (02°40'N 15°00'E), c.140 km to the west (R. J. Dowsett & F. Dowsett-Lemaire in *Bull. ABC* 5: 142; Taku Awa II pers. comm.). We are hoping to conduct further field work in the Sangha Lodge area to assess the range and size of this population. Further updates will be posted at www.sanghalodge.com.

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First record of Chilean Skua *Catharacta chilensis* for the African region

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Première mention du Labbe du Chili *Catharacta chilensis* pour la région africaine. Un Labbe du Chili *Catharacta chilensis* a été photographié à l'île Inaccessible, dans l'archipel de Tristan da Cunha, dans l'Atlantique Sud, en novembre 2009. L'espèce niche le long de la côte de l'Amérique du Sud, du centre du Chili jusqu'au sud de l'Argentine. Les oiseaux non nicheurs se dispersent vers le nord jusqu'au Pérou et le Brésil, et occasionnellement atteignent les Malouines, mais la donnée présentée ici constitue apparemment la première en dehors des eaux continentales sud-américaines.

The taxonomy of the large, *Catharacta* skuas breeding in the Southern Hemisphere is far from resolved. Even comparison of mitochondrial markers has failed to elucidate the situation, with only partial segregation of the various taxa (Ritz *et al.* 2008). This is perhaps unsurprising given records of hybridisation among taxa (e.g., Devilliers 1978, Reinhardt *et al.* 1997). However, most authorities recognise three species: South Polar Skua *C. maccormicki*, Subantarctic Skua *C. antarctica* and Chilean Skua *C. chilensis* (Furness 1996, Olsen & Larsson 1997). Of these, Subantarctic Skua is resident in the African region, with breeding populations of *C. a. lonnbergii* on the subantarctic Prince Edward and Crozet

archipelagos, and Tristan Skua *C. a. hamiltoni* is endemic to Tristan da Cunha and Gough Island. South Polar Skua is a scarce non-breeding migrant to African waters. To date, there have been no records of Chilean Skuas in the African region.

In November 2009, I photographed a Chilean Skua on Inaccessible Island, in the Tristan da Cunha group, central South Atlantic Ocean. It was first observed on 25 November and remained until at least 1 December, when I left the island. During this period it loosely associated with a non-breeding 'club' of Tristan Skuas roosting at Skua Pond, near West Point, but it also attempted to advertise a territory on the adjacent *Scirpus*-covered bog, where c.20 pairs of Tristan Skuas